



# **FACTS, FIGURES & FACES**

## **NEW ERA 21 YEARS**

2018

Dr Bairbre Fleming, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

LIKE A SMALL BOAT  
ON THE OCEAN  
SENDING BIG WAVES  
INTO MOTION...



# FACTS, FIGURES & FACES

## NEW ERA 21 YEARS

2018

Dr Bairbre Fleming, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

# 21

YEARS SINCE THE FIRST ACCESS INITIATIVE  
IN UCD

## FOREWORD

Twenty-one years ago, individual leadership coupled with a pragmatic “can do” attitude identified a need, acted on it, and started the university on a journey to support inclusion and diversity. I wonder if those involved realised the transformational impact their efforts would have in a single generation.

Today, we recognise the value of creating a truly diverse and inclusive university, a University for All, not only because it reflects our values, but because it is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and institutional success.

University for All is underpinned by a belief that higher education should be an option for all students, realising aspirations, opening pathways, fulfilling potential where everyone

works collectively towards establishing a diverse and inclusive university. Addressing diversity in our lecture halls is not something to be assigned as extra work operating in parallel to the “normal” business but is core to our values and our goals.

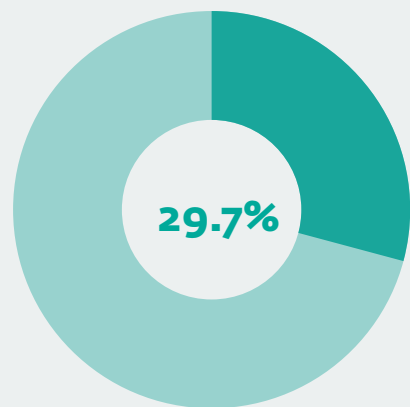
The changes that have occurred over the last two decades have been gradual, each requiring effort, imagination and a belief in the vision. The contrast between the start of the New ERA initiative in UCD and our current achievements in this area are stark when looked at in snapshot - from a small targeted scheme to a centrally positioned hub that profiles inclusion; where access and participation moves from an add-on in the strategy to a central pillar of our mission to provide “a supportive community in which

every member of the university is enabled to achieve their full potential.”

I hope when we look back in another generation, our vision for an inclusive learning environment, designed for the full range of human diversity, rather than a perceived notion of a typical or so-called ‘traditional’ student, with the educational experience, supports and facilities, designed around the needs of all students will be a reality.



**Professor Mark Rogers**  
UCD Registrar and Deputy  
President



PERCENTAGE OF UCD UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENT POPULATION DRAWN FROM  
UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

## INTRODUCTION

UCD has a long tradition of pioneering educational access for under-represented groups. Twenty-one years ago, the university responded imaginatively to the needs of communities experiencing low participation in higher education. Rooted in research, UCD developed the New ERA initiative to provide a direct entry route to take account of a range of contextual factors, including the students' personal circumstances, opportunities available to them, as well as their educational attainment. This approach to entry was successful, enabling the numbers of students admitted to the university to grow steadily. Importantly, these students were provided with a suite of supports, thus enabling them to participate and succeed. The experience of the New ERA initiative also informed national policy, and in collaboration with seven other

higher education institutions, morphed into the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).

Today, we have an expanded range of supplementary entry routes and pathways to study. We also offer a comprehensive suite of student supports, via our mainstream services and we also offer a wide range of specialist supports and services.

In UCD, we continue to pioneer: the University for All framework enables and fosters a campus where diversity and inclusion is considered everyone's business, and all students feel welcome, belong, and are valued. We have made significant progress in this regard and currently, **29.7% of our undergraduate student population is drawn from under-**

**represented groups**, including those from low-income households, students with disabilities, mature students, ethnic minorities, refugees, and asylum seekers.

The achievements of today are built on the shoulders of those pioneers of twenty-one years ago. We salute their commitment, dedication and impact. We honour their impressive legacy and continue the journey to equality for all.



**Dr Anna M Kelly**  
Director of UCD Access and  
Lifelong Learning



## 1: Introduction

Evaluating the Impact of the UCD New ERA Widening Participation Initiative

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

A person's education is one of the principle influences on their outcomes in life. Education is an important determinant of an individual's income, where they live, and how they participate in society. It can also affect how people bring up their children and how they manage their own health. There is ample evidence of significant benefits to being more educated and Ireland is no exception to this trend.<sup>1</sup>

The ongoing growth of the information society, the emphasis on innovation and increased globalisation are likely to further increase the importance of education. Therefore, a strong argument can be made that society should invest in education to ensure that people's education is not constrained by their parents' socio-economic status (SES). Note that a concern over efficiency. While equity considerations are central for increasing access to education: it is also an issue of efficiency. For our society to prosper it is essential that skills and talent of young people are not wasted, just as a firm needs to ensure that its resources are used to the fullest extent.

... agreement on such equity consideration, it is striking that such a strong correlation ... education and their parents' SES. While parental background acts as a ... it is worth noting that the extent of this constraint is ... (2009, Table 12.3) measure the correlation ... father's education has the highest ... attendance at third ... higher

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Access has been synonymous with UCD since its inception in 1854. Several initiatives and strategies have promoted the inclusion of a broad and diverse representation of students in UCD. The legacy of UCD's leadership on access continues to be experienced across campus and in Irish society.

This book details a chapter of this story – the evolution of an access route for students from low-income and low-participation communities. The New ERA programme evolved from a series of initiatives and interventions. In 1994 the UCD Registrar Professor John Kelly established a UCD Steering Committee on Equality of Participation in Higher Education. This committee commissioned research on social class and participation. The Lynch and

O'Riordan study helped inform and shape the access model in UCD which ultimately became New ERA.

There were many steps and stages in this process, which cannot all be captured in one small publication. What can be captured is the remarkable vision and expansion of a modest access programme into the significant and innovative pathway of today



**Bairbre Fleming**

Deputy Director, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

# 1997

**The New ERA programme was officially launched in November 1997 following approval and agreement of the HEA, UCD's Governing Authority, Academic Council and all faculties. The principal aim of the programme is to encourage and facilitate increased participation in higher education by students who do not, for a variety of social and economic reasons, view going to university as an attractive or attainable option.**

NEW ERA REPORT, YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 1998

New ERA was a multi-dimensional programme that worked with designated disadvantaged schools to increase the number of socio-economically disadvantaged students progressing to higher education and to improve student outcomes once at UCD.

Access students entering UCD also received further support including financial aid, mentoring and academic supports.

A proportion of New ERA students also benefitted from a lower Leaving Certificate points requirements ("Direct" students) with the other New ERA participants ("Merit" students) being required to obtain the same points as other students. The national HEAR scheme replaced the local New ERA scheme



**“In communities and schools affected by such inequality, voices were increasingly being raised about low participation rates among some communities and groups.”**

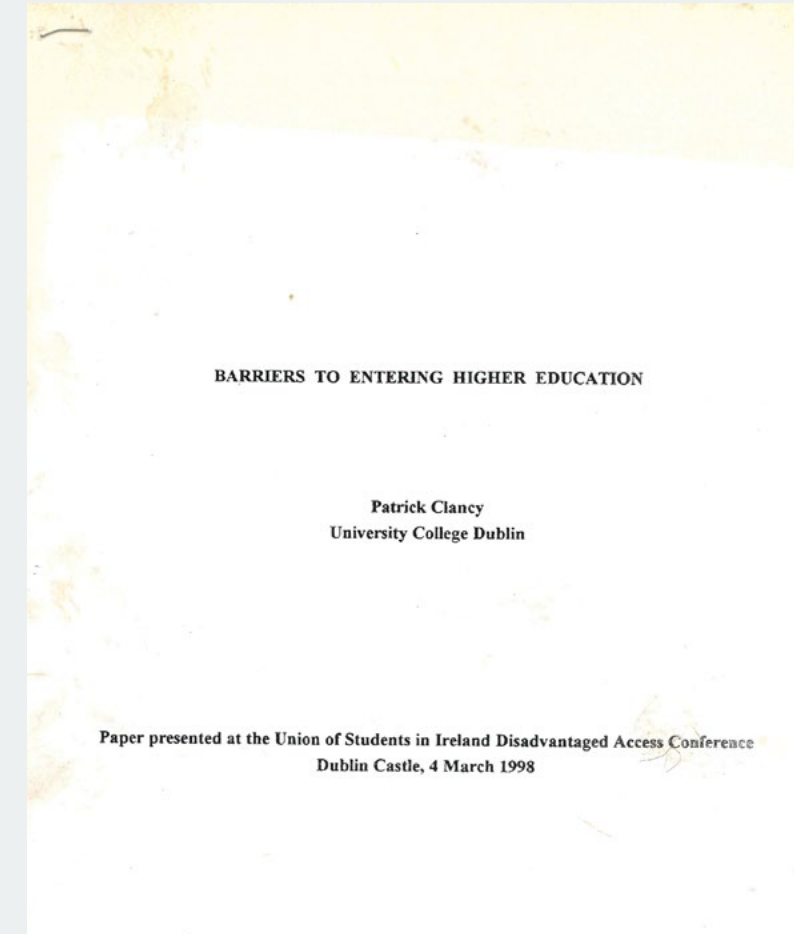
## SETTING THE CONTEXT...

The HEA and UCD deserve credit for originally revealing the inequality that existed in access to higher education in Ireland. The HEA recognised the need to establish the facts and UCD facilitated the [research].

Back in the late 1970s, the HEA approached Professor Pat Clancy and Prof Ciaran Benson to research the higher education needs of the Dublin area. “We did the study fairly quickly and developed a methodology, which I have subsequently used in my research,” Clancy says. “We described the phenomenon - who was coming into higher education and where they were coming from. We looked at the changing demographics and the growth of the outer suburbs.”

**Professor Patrick Clancy in an interview with the Irish Times, 7.11.2000**

Professor Patrick Clancy’s regular studies extended to the country at large.



**Professor  
Patrick Clancy**



MARCH 23RD 1994 - LAUNCH MEETING

## LIFT-OFF

“1994 proved to be the year of lift-off. Without fanfare the then Registrar, John Kelly co-opted the support of the then President, Art Cosgrove who duly convened a meeting of academics from different disciplines throughout the college... The meeting took place on the 23rd March, making it a red-letter day. From there teachers from several schools, which were designated disadvantaged, were invited to join the group. Under the guidance of Kevin Hurley, Director of Adult Education, backed up by unique research conducted under the supervision of Kathleen Lynch of Equality Studies, the movement quickly began to take shape and to develop relatively quickly into the vigorous programme which is such a thriving element of provision at Belfield today...

The Registrar's Committee on Equality in Participation in Higher Education was established in February 1997 to identify the barriers to equitable participation in higher education, with special reference to UCD, and to make representation on how UCD might contribute to a raising of the participation of those from disadvantaged backgrounds – recognising the heterogeneity of disadvantage – among its student population.”



**Dr Kevin Hurley**



**The University for All framework enables us to foster a campus where diversity and inclusion is considered everyone's business, and all students feel welcome, belong, and are valued.**



ÁINE GALVIN

## ÁINE GALVIN

I was appointed to the role of Coordinator of Equality of Participation in Higher Education on 1st April 1997 to take forward UCD's vision and commitment to establishing an access programme. I worked closely with an energetic and committed Steering Group, ably led by Kevin Hurley. This was a classic 'greenfield' project and I relished the opportunity to be part of such an exciting new initiative.

In those early days the focus was on establishing relationships with the teachers, students and parents in schools in Ballyfermot, Crumlin, Clondalkin, Tallaght, Sallynoggin and Bray; liaising with Deans and faculty to agree admission requirements and supports for incoming New ERA students; and devising a programme of outreach activities to promote university as a positive and realistic

opportunity for students in socio-economic disadvantaged areas.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, there was resistance in some quarters to the widening access agenda. Much credit is due to Dr Caroline Hussey (Registrar) who was a strong and constant advocate for the programme. The admission of a small group of access students in September 1997, just a few short months after the programme was initiated, was a clear signal to all of UCD's commitment and determination to make the 'access' idea a reality!

### Áine Galvin





## MEMORABLE MOMENTS FROM THOSE EARLY YEARS

In her capacity as Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Queen's University Belfast, Professor **Mary McAlleese** visited UCD in **summer 1997** keen to learn about our 'equal access' programme with a view to setting-up something similar in Queens. Little did we know that we were advising the woman who would soon be elected President of Ireland!

The late 1990s saw the emergence of fledgling access programmes in a number of Irish universities, leading to the establishment of an informal network of access officers, chaired by **Áine Galvin** of UCD. That early commitment to collaboration and partnership across the sector continues today and has proven to be crucial to the long-term success and impact of access programmes.

Still in its infancy, the New ERA programme celebrated the success of its first graduates in **2000 and 2001**.....a truly wonderful start to the new millennium!

**Áine Galvin**



DR CAROLINE HUSSEY

## DR CAROLINE HUSSEY

UCD Registrar Caroline Hussey was indefatigable and relentless in promoting and progressing the New ERA programme. She corresponded widely and persuasively, encouraging colleagues and public figures to contribute:

"... the important thing is to motivate kids to aspire to university ... and the important outcome is that they've got places"

# 1998

**"You may be aware that UCD is now attempting to address a little of the socio-economic imbalance among our student population. And we expect our first substantial intake of students on our New ERA (Equal Rights to Access) programme in September**

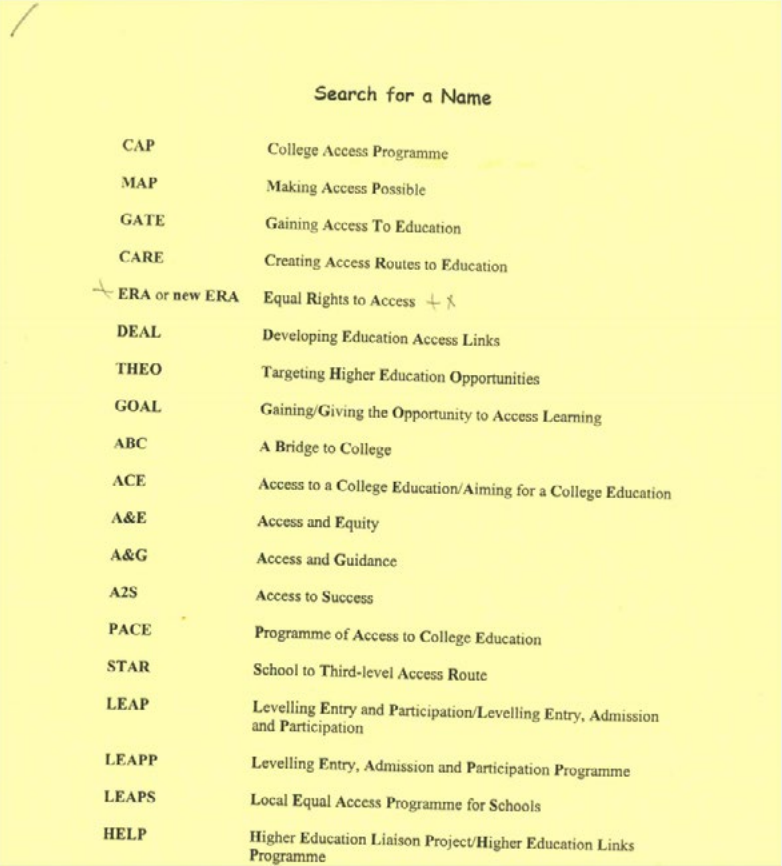
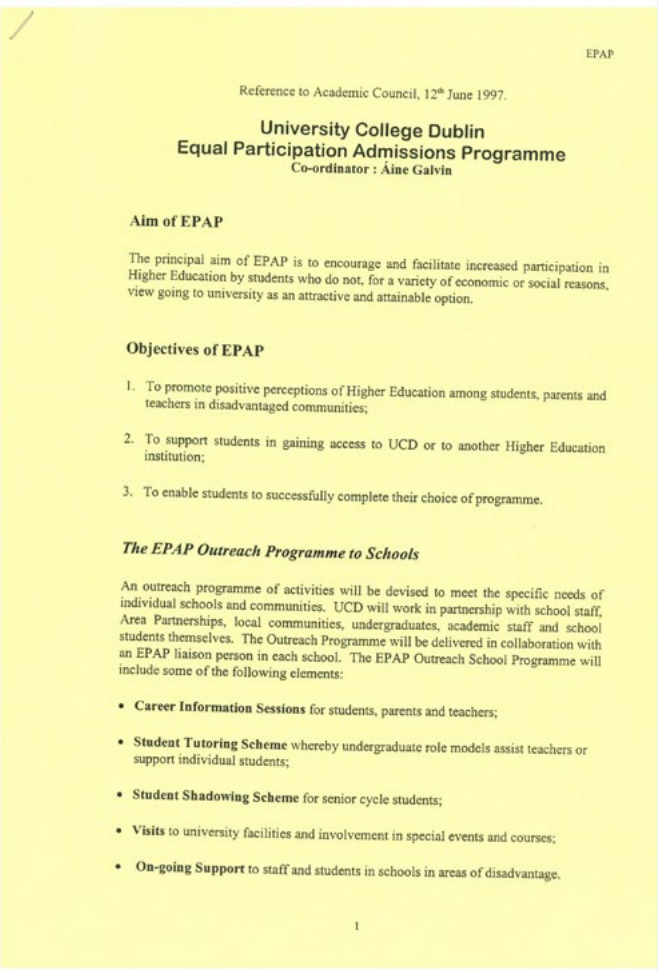
A LETTER FROM DR HUSSEY TO MAEVE BINCHY ON 7TH JULY 1998





# ORIGINS OF NEW ERA

The original programme was called EPAP (Equal Participation Admissions Programme)



# 27.05.1997 SEARCH FOR A NAME!!!

This dynamic process needed a name to match its creativity and innovation ... so there was a search for a new name.

# 1997

First 8 students admitted to UCD in the  
New ERA Direct Entry Scheme



## Student Intake for the Academic Session 1997/'98

Faculty/School	No. of Places Available	No. of Eligible Applicants*	No. of Places Offered	No. of Places Accepted
Agriculture	3	0	0	0
Architecture	1	2	1	0
Arts	Unconfirmed	6	2**	2
Business & Legal	3	1	1	1
Commerce	8	1	1	1
Engineering	6	0	0	0
Law	3	0	0	0
Medicine	3	1	1	1
Science	8	1	1	1
Social Science	3	2	2	2
Veterinary Science	1	0	0	0
Totals	Unconfirmed	14	9	8

\* Eligible Applicants are those who met the following criteria:  
(1) Socio-economically disadvantaged  
(2) Attained the academic standards recommended by faculties.

\*\* The two places that were offered to *New ERA* applicants in First Arts were made by the CAO. These students are eligible for financial support.

**November 1997  
The New ERA  
programme was  
launched by the  
Chairman of the HEA  
Mr Noel Lindsay**

# LAUNCH

## New ERA Summer School 1998

### Summer School Planning Group

1. Dr. Aidan Moran, Chairperson (Faculty of Arts-Psychology)
2. Mr. Joe Carthy (Faculty of Science-Computer Science)
3. Professor Peter Clarke (Faculty of Commerce-Accountancy)
4. Ms. Áine Galvin (New Era Co-ordinator)
5. Mr. Kevin Hurley (Director of Adult Education)
6. Dr. Frank MacLoughlin (Faculty of Engineering- Chemical Engineering)
7. Dr. Grace Mulcahy (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine- Microbiology & Parasitology)
8. Mr. John Nisbet (Students' Union)
9. Ms. Mary Ruane (Faculty of Arts-Language Centre & Education Dept.)
10. Dr. Sandra Tighe (Student Health Centre)

# 1998

## 1<sup>ST</sup> SUMMER SCHOOL ORIENTATION

Monday 31 August – Friday 11 September

2 week full-time residential summer school

**“All New ERA students intent on taking up a place  
in UCD will be required to attend”**

-NEW ERA PROGRESS REPORT MAY 1998



# Red Eye Special

What they call the 7am early morning train from Portlaoise to Dublin...

**“the chilly air,  
the unearthly hour  
& the darkness  
didn’t put us off  
too much as we  
were excited about  
going to UCD for  
the day”**

STUDENT FROM HAYWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL







## ALL ROADS LEADING TO UCD

I joined UCD in 2000, the start of a new century, and a very exciting time for me in my career, I was the first Outreach Officer and given the opportunity to design and develop new outreach projects including the 5th year residential summers schools, Uni4U and TAKE5.

I can't believe it is **21 years since the launch of New ERA**. I have lots of very fond memories of working in New ERA! I loved working with students and have had the privilege to meet and work with so many wonderful students over the years. They showed me how valuable education is and how important it is to ensure that everyone has access to it.

And now I am working on creating many diverse new paths to UCD. So far we have seven pathways. Who knows how many more there will be in the next 21 years.

### Fiona Sweeney



Head of Outreach, Engagement and Transition, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning



# Take 5

The idea for Take 5 started on a train... colleagues across several HEIs came up with a great idea...

Take 5 was a collaborative initiative between UCD, TCD, NUI Maynooth, DCU and DIT. The summer school encouraged participants to investigate their level options and gain experience of the five participating HEIs. They engaged in taster lectures, computers, project work, presentation skills, sports and cultural events.





# 2001

## HIGHER EDUCATION DIRECT APPLICATION SCHEME 2001

The Higher Education Direct Application Scheme was a joint initiative of UCD, NUIM, UCC, TCD, DCU, UL and DIT. **This initiative was launched as a pilot scheme in 2001.** It was further implemented in 2002. The scheme aimed to “facilitate the movement of socio-economically disadvantaged students between the participating HEIs and to streamline the admissions procedures operated by the HEIs.”





**“the opportunities that will land at your feet will be amazing - take them ...”**

MICHAEL BROWN; GRADUATED: 2011  
POST PRIMARY TEACHER ENGLISH

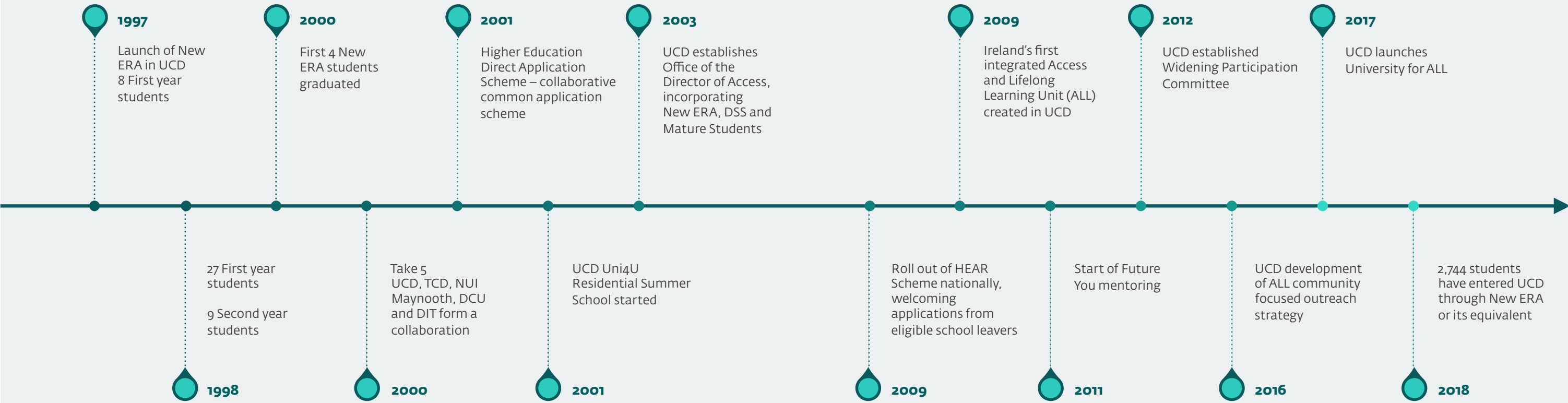
I have many memories of New ERA, but the most poignant is as follows: I reached the end of the orientation week and in just five days I had made friends for life - I knew then they would be such, and we're still in touch now. We were standing outside the restaurant saying goodbye, only until the following Monday, but I knew then I was about to embark on an unforgettable experience with these people. New ERA gave me the opportunity to create this memory.

If you allow it to, this opportunity will help to shape the rest of your life in ways that you cannot even fathom at this moment in time. The effect a university education can have on your future prospects is profound - give

it everything you have; the opportunities that will land at your feet will be amazing - take them; the challenges will be difficult - embrace them; and the friends you will make will bring you support, laughter and, of course, friendship - welcome them.



# TIMELINE



## PATRICK KELLY - YEAR OF GRADUATION: 2008

### 2016 – First EAN Alumni Honour Award

My main memories of New ERA were as a student coordinator/ leader on the 2nd and 5th year summer schools, staying in Belgrove and trying to indoctrinate the next generation of New Era-ites and instilling some self-belief that anyone from anywhere from any background can go to college with the right support.

Presently I'm a commissioned medical officer in the Irish Defence Forces since 2014, after completing GP training. Since commissioning, I've served in Sierra Leone during the Ebola Virus disease outbreak in 2015, and on three UN peacekeeping missions in Lebanon, Israel and Syria.

My message to the next generation of students is to believe in yourself and to believe in the people of UCD who will do their best to make sure you have a fulfilling and happy time in college. It doesn't matter who you are, where you're from or what your parents do/did as long as you are committed 100% to giving your best to graduate from college. As Mandela said "Education is the best weapon with which to change the world."

Patrick Kelly with ALL staff Fiona Sweeney, Anna Kelly, Jenni Murphy and Áine Murphy

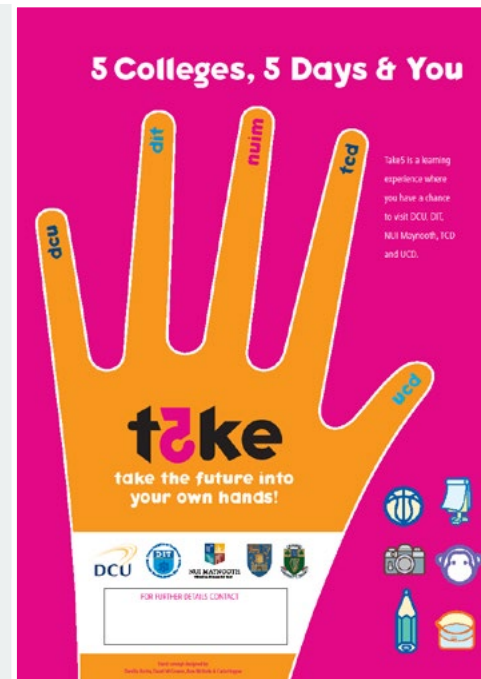
**"...believe in yourself and to believe in the people of UCD who will do their best to make sure you have a fulfilling and happy time in college"**





## SO MANY INGREDIENTS IN NEW ERA PROGRAMME

- Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)
- Voluntary Tutoring
- Financial Supports
- Summer School
- Shadowing Day
- Take 5
- Personal Supports
- Primary Schools Stepping Stones
- Achievement Awards



**Out of the Fire,  
into the Frying Pan**

*Cooking New ERA Style*



## NEW ERA VOLUNTARY TUTORING PROGRAMME

UCD students tutoring secondary school pupils once a week over 8 weeks from 1999 to 2016

6

SCHOOLS

1,455

PUPILS

17

YEARS

1,444

UCD STUDENTS



# 1998

## First Student Shadowing Programme

26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

### STUDENT SHADOWING SCHEME

Outreach Programme: moving from a school based programme to a community based activity

- **26th February 1998** – First Student Shadowing Programme – 99 pupils
- **3,260** students have participated in the Shadowing Programme and on the Student Experience Day
- **2,863** UCD Students have volunteered their time and experience to encourage students to experience UCD.





## ACCESS LEADERS



Access Students have the opportunity to train as Access Leaders.



In the last five years alone 322 ALL students were trained as Access Leaders in UCD

## UCD SCHOOLS OUTREACH





## HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS ROUTE 2009

The HEAR national scheme evolved – established by 8 Higher Education Institutions based on clear evidence that socio-economic disadvantage negatively impacts on education attainment at school and progression to higher education

Participating institutions included:  
DCU, DIT, NUIG, NUIM, TCD, UCC, UCD and UL



**HEAR** | **HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
ACCESS  
ROUTE**

Taoiseach Awards for Hear 2012




# 2,744

Numbers of New ERA students









## FUTURE YOU



UCD Access & Lifelong Learning Centre  
**Future You Mentoring**

**Evaluation of University College Dublin's  
Future You Peer Support Access Initiative:  
A Relational, Community Development  
Systemic Outreach Approach**

Dr. Simiadh McNally (Lecturer, National College of Ireland) &  
Dr. Paul Downes (Director, Educational Disadvantage Centre,  
St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra)





## OUTREACH NOW: WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES





## FINANCIAL SUPPORT & SCHOLARSHIPS

UCD now has the  
largest scholarship  
programme in the  
country.



FOUNDATION

UCD Access & Lifelong Learning



University College Dublin  
**Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships**  
Promoting justice and equality: University for ALL

# 2000

The first four New ERA  
students graduate

# 2009

Over 500 New ERA students  
graduated since 1997



University College Dublin  
University for All

## FIGURES UCD IN 2018

29.7%

of UCD students from  
under-represented groups

1,449

students from low income  
households

836

HEAR students (who enter UCD  
through the Higher Education Access  
Route and are Full-time UG)



PROFESSOR GRACE MULCAHY

## PROFESSOR GRACE MULCAHY

I am proud to be associated with UCD which 21 years ago pioneered the development of a direct entry route for students from communities experiencing disadvantage. In fact, I was on the first New ERA Summer School Planning Group.

In the intervening years the university has come a long way in supporting these students to participate fully in university life. Today our university provides a more supportive environment to our diverse student body. As an academic, and latterly as Chair of the UCD Widening Participation committee, it is an important part of my work – and all our work – to make sure we continue to strive for an even playing field – Cothrom na Féinne

## PROFESSOR COLIN SCOTT

Ireland is recognised internationally as a leader in supporting students for socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds into and through higher education.

I am very proud of the key role UCD has played in developing access to higher education for these students and the continuing commitment to enhance opportunity to give access to the transformative experience of higher education.

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning has played a key leadership role working the colleagues right across the university to deploy our capacity to sustain and develop this vital commitment to delivering on UCD's values.



PROFESSOR COLIN SCOTT

## TESTIMONIALS

I started in UCD under New ERA in 2004 and I graduated in 2008. My memories of New ERA all revolve around the friends I made during this time. I was very fortunate to work with New ERA on the many programmes being run at the time; primary school visits, 2nd year/5th year summer school and revision workshops. I gained so much experience and confidence being involved in these projects. The staff were incredibly supportive during tough times, and were always very welcoming when I just wanted to come in for a chat.

I am now a Secondary School teacher in Tallaght, as well as coordinator of the ACE programme (Access to College Education) which provides 6th year students the

opportunity to gain academic supports to enable them to go Third Level.

I loved my time at university, so much so that I went on to study for two Masters Degrees; one in classics, another in Special Educational Needs.

**To all new students I say this: take this time to become the most amazing version of yourself, and don't be afraid to ask for help.**

**- Suzanne Mc Vicker**

I graduated with an Arts degree in History and English. I then went on to do a Professional Masters in Education all in UCD. I've been involved with UCD since very early in secondary school, I attended both the 2nd and 5th year summer schools. I've so many wonderful memories from New ERA and the all the work done in the Access Centre.

I've worked as the coordinator for the 5th year Future You summer school for the last 2 years. In a space of five days you can see students develop a whole new mindset to college and their own future. That realisation by the students evokes a sense of accomplishment in me. I've been just a tiny factor in students realising that they are capable of amazing things!

For the next generation of students, I would like to pass on this message: You can do it! You're capable of amazing things.

**Your time in college is precious, study hard, make friends, give back your time, have a laugh and enjoy the learning it's one of the best parts!.**

**- Kate Farrelly**



One of the many happy memories I have of being involved with New ERA is actually right at the start of my college life – first year orientation. It was an incredibly enriching experience as well as a fantastic first impression of UCD.

Going on that week meant you had familiar faces on campus the minute you started classes and didn't get lost going from building to building - it made UCD seem like a less daunting place. All the leaders involved just seemed so excited to impart their wisdom on us and make it the best week of your life by the end. We all established friendships that not only stayed with us through orientation week, but all four years of college and beyond. I couldn't have asked for a better start to my first semester in college.

**As a first-year student you don't need to know everything or have it all figured out right away.**

People get wrapped up in the idea that they have to know how to navigate campus, what societies to join, how to cook/do laundry and what career path to take on the first day. Sometimes the beauty is in figuring these things out organically.

To be a successful student, you just have to be willing to learn as you go and be open to new experiences.

**- Laura Egan-O'Brien**

**“For the next generation of students, I would like to pass on this message: You can do it! You're capable of amazing things.”**

KATE FARRELLY



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### NEW ERA 21 YEARS

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Cover quote: Rachel Platten, Fight Song

**...I MIGHT ONLY  
HAVE ONE MATCH  
BUT I CAN MAKE AN  
EXPLOSION**



University College Dublin  
University for All